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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 003869

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: CHARGE MEETS WITH VISITING UN/EAD PIRELLI

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES DAVID M. SATTERFIELD FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) AND (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action message. Please see para 6.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary. Charge and UN Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) Chief Carina Pirelli agreed during a September 17 meeting that Iraq's December 15 elections must be seen as credible. Charge advised that the EAD and the IECI must seek to address Sunni perceptions of bias, real or imagined, through vigorous engagement in educational outreach; additional allocation of electoral resources; serious consideration of all options, including same-day registration and polling; and extensions to the voter and political entity registration periods. Pirelli requested USG assistance in pressing UN leadership to allow her to remain longer in Baghdad, to grant UN Commissioner-designate LeChevalier a security training waiver, and to restore the UN electoral staff ceiling to 25 from its current 15 positions. End Summary.

[1](#)3. (C) Charge and UN EAD Pirelli agreed during a September 17 meeting that Iraq's December 15 elections will be held to a much higher standard of credibility than that of January [1](#)2005. Pirelli emphasized that no matter the outcome, the results of the election will certainly be challenged. Charge agreed but told Pirelli that nonetheless the referendum must be credible and transparent. He said that pre-election outreach efforts must target the Sunni areas. He added that Sunni concerns need to be addressed, such as IECI staff composition, public education in Sunni areas, and extended voter support to provide the Sunnis every possible opportunity to participate in the elections.

[1](#)4. (C) Charge emphasized that the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) cannot wait until the last moment to request MNF-I assistance and support. IECI needs to develop a good logistics and security plan now. Similarly, Charge stressed that IECI needs to immediately develop a detailed budget that stands up to Ministry of Finance scrutiny and will allow donor countries to make contributions based on accurate numbers. To further establish the IECI's credibility, Charge advised Pirelli that the IECI should look expeditiously into the unusually high numbers in the recent Kirkuk voter registration update. Charge urged that UN EAD and the IECI be sensitive to Sunni perceptions of bias, real or imagined, through additional allocation of electoral resources if needed. He suggested that the IECI should seriously consider all options to enfranchise Sunnis, including same-day registration and polling and extensions to the voter and political entity registration periods. Similar IECI attention, Charge added, needs to go to the Christians in western Ninewa who were denied full ability to vote in January.

[1](#)5. (C) In response to Charge's question regarding specific USG support, Pirelli stated that the IECI is moving forward on work that previously had been languishing. This includes budget preparation and drafting of regulations now that the election law is finished. She said she was able and willing to remain in Baghdad until at least October 15 to allow overlap with UN IECI Commissioner-designate LeChevalier and prevent the IECI from losing momentum. However, she said the UN Secretariat in New York is unwilling to support extension of her stay. She also pointed out that UNAMI has a 90-person staff ceiling, with 15 of those positions filled by the electoral staff. The UNAMI ceiling needs to be raised, she said, for the electoral staff to return to the same 25 positions they enjoyed during the January elections. Finally, she requested USG backing, if possible, to shorten LeChevalier's security training period in Amman so he can arrive in Baghdad as soon as possible. Any loss in training, she suggested, could be made up during his first break in Amman.

[1](#)6. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Post requests that Department ask USUN to approach the UN Secretariat at an appropriate level to stress the need for a sustained high-level EAD presence in Iraq up through the December elections. We should press the UN to get LeChevalier here as early as possible or ensure that an adequate substitute is in Baghdad in his stead. We defer to our colleagues in New York as to whether the best substitute would be Pirelli or someone with comparable background in electoral matters. Our bottom line is that there must be a senior UN representative with the appropriate

skills in Iraq to help ensure the success of the referendum and the December elections. Post also requests that we ask the UN Secretariat to increase the current electoral staff positions in Iraq from 15 to 25. Finally, we should continue to press for LeChevalier's earliest possible arrival in Baghdad.

Satterfield